United Nations S/AC.51/2011/4

Security Council

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Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Conclusions on children and armed conflict in Chad

1. At its 29th meeting, on 25 February 2011, the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict examined the third report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Chad (S/2011/64), covering the period from July 2008 to December 2010, which was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. A representative of the Permanent Mission of Chad to the United Nations participated in the subsequent discussion.

2. The members of the Working Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General, submitted in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), and the analysis and the recommendations contained therein met with a favourable response.

3. They welcomed the progressive improvement in the overall security situation in Chad, but expressed deep concern that child recruitment in violation of applicable international law, had been an ongoing phenomenon during the most recent reporting period. In particular, the displacement of families had resulted in the movement of children within some areas in eastern Chad, as well as into the Sudan, in extremely vulnerable conditions, making children potential targets for exploitation, recruitment and trafficking.

4. They welcomed the fact that the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) in December 2010 had not resulted in a security vacuum. However, they expressed concern at the risk of the violation and abuse of children's rights, including killing and maiming, rape and sexual violence, and attacks on humanitarian personnel in eastern Chad.

5. They underlined the urgent need for the Government of Chad to engage in dialogue with the United Nations with a view to finalizing the draft action plan between the Government of Chad and the United Nations Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting regarding children associated with armed forces and armed groups in Chad, to halt the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009) and its commitments under the Paris Principles and Commitments with regard to children associated with armed forces or armed groups.

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6. They encouraged the Government to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

7. The representative of Chad:

(a) Noted the adoption in January 1991 of a decree to fight the recruitment of children in the Chadian army;

(b) Reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Chad to the Paris Principles and Commitments;

(c) Noted that efforts of the Government and broad contributions of the international community, in particular United Nations agencies, had helped to bring about major progress in improving the living conditions of children, as recognized in the Secretary-General's report.

8. Further to the meeting, and subject to and consistent with applicable international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), the Working Group agreed to the following direct action.

Public statement issued by the Chair of the Working Group

9. The Working Group agreed to address a message to all parties to the conflict in Chad through a public statement by the Chair of the Working Group:

(a) *Expressing deep concern* regarding the continuing violations and abuses committed against children in Chad by all parties to the conflict, and urging the immediate implementation of the previous conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in Chad (S/AC.51/2007/16 and S/AC.51/2008/15);

(b) *Strongly urging* all parties to the conflict, including those armed groups not engaged in the peace process, to immediately halt the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law, and to release all children remaining within their ranks, as called for in Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009);

(c) *Expressing deep concern* regarding the killing and maiming of children and other civilians in violation of applicable international law, including as a result of the use of anti-personnel mines, reminding all parties to the conflict of their obligations under international law, and calling upon all non-State armed groups to refrain from using anti-personnel mines, which could cause the killing and maiming of children.

Recommendations to the Security Council

10. The Working Group agreed to recommend the following to the Security Council:

Letter to the Government of Chad

(a) *Commending* the efforts of the Government to address the recruitment and use of children by its armed forces in contravention of international law, including by newly integrated elements, and welcoming its stated policy position against recruitment of children;

(b) *Welcoming* the signing on 11 June 2010 by the representatives of Chad of the N'Djamena declaration to end the use of child soldiers, as well as the commitment to developing a plan of action to implement the declaration, and urging the Government in this regard to take all steps necessary to ensure the full implementation of the declaration, thereby strengthening cross-border coordination on the monitoring and reporting mechanism;

(c) *Noting* that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians lies with the Government of Chad, and calling on it to ensure that child protection remains a central pillar of its public security strategy;

(d) *Noting* the withdrawal of MINURCAT and the heightened need to protect children in eastern Chad, and recognizing the Government's commitment and further encouraging it, through the Détachement intégré de sécurité, to ensure an adequate security presence among camps for internally displaced persons and refugees and within the host population in order to prevent the recurrence of the recruitment of children from camps and protect against violations of children's rights;

(e) *Expressing concern* regarding the slow progress in the dialogue on the action plan to halt the recruitment and use of children and, in this connection, urging the Government to engage, as a matter of immediate priority, in dialogue with the United Nations in order to finalize and implement a concrete, time-bound action plan, in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009);

(f) *Expressing deep concern* regarding the continued incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, including those perpetrated by members of the armed forces, and strongly encouraging the Government to systematically investigate and prosecute all perpetrators of rape and other crimes of sexual violence, and to strengthen prevention and response strategies;

(g) *Urging* the Government of Chad to issue clear orders to its military chain of command, including at the local level, prohibiting the recruitment and use of children, in line with its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, and ensuring the immediate and unconditional release of all children;

(h) *Also urging* the Government to ensure access to humanitarian aid, including health care and education;

(i) *Further urging* the Government to make every effort to ensure that children's rights are respected by all armed groups present in its territory, and to continue to facilitate, by all means necessary, unhindered access for United Nations actors to all military centres and camps, in particular Moussoro, for the identification and release of children from these groups;

(j) *Requesting* the Government to ensure that humanitarian demining programmes are in line with international standards, that appropriate attention is afforded to child victims, and that mine-risk education programmes are in place;

(k) *Urging* the Government to take immediate steps towards the ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

Letter to the Secretary-General

(a) *Requesting* the Secretary-General to call upon the United Nations country team to ensure that the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), continues under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund after the departure of MINURCAT, in order to ensure the fulfilment of reporting obligations to the Security Council, as well as to follow up on the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations and the conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in Chad (S/AC.51/2007/16 and S/AC.51/2008/15), in particular regarding the finalization of the action plan with the Government of Chad;

(b) *Also requesting* the Secretary-General to urge the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting to strengthen monitoring and reporting activities and to deploy resources and ensure sufficient capacity for this purpose as necessary.

Direct action by the Working Group

11. The Working Group also agreed that letters should be addressed from the Chair:

To the World Bank and donors

(a) *Highlighting* the critical need to mobilize resources in the light of the withdrawal of MINURCAT, in particular the need to support the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in order to maintain, to the extent possible, the Mission's previous monitoring and reporting coverage, and support the implementation of the action plan between the Government of Chad and the United Nations Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting regarding children associated with armed forces and armed groups in Chad, once finalized;

(b) *Appealing* to the donor community to provide additional support for the programmatic interventions of national authorities, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations, in particular for the reintegration of children, as well as the strengthening of the judiciary.